

WHAT IS THE HARVEST INFORMATION PROGRAM (HIP)?



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In 1991, the US Fish and Wildlife Service announced the revision of migratory bird hunting regulations: All migratory bird hunters would be required to register with the Harvest Information Program (HIP). This program was active in every state (except Hawaii) by 1998. The purpose of HIP is to increase the precision and accuracy of harvest estimates of migratory birds. A small number of those registering for HIP are mailed a more thorough survey, based on their responses to the screening questions answered during registration.

What does HIP require of hunters?

Anyone planning to hunt mourning doves, woodcock, snipe, ducks, geese, coots, rails, or gallinules must register with the HIP program. In cooperation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Indiana requires that all migratory game bird hunters register with the HIP program each year. Registration may be done online or by telephone. Hunters must register in each state in which they plan to hunt.

How will HIP be enforced?

Conservation officers are able to telephone the 1-800 number and access the database to verify a hunter's compliance with HIP. Information provided during registration will be available to conservation officers immediately after the hunter registers.

Don't we already have migratory bird surveys?

Yes, but our harvest surveys have historically had some problems. Before HIP, the US Fish and Wildlife Service conducted two surveys (the hunter survey and the parts collection survey) that were used to estimate waterfowl harvest. The hunter survey was sent to waterfowl hunters and was fairly good at estimating annual waterfowl harvest. However, waterfowl hunters also estimated harvest of coots, woodcock, snipe, sora, rails, gallinules, white-winged doves, band-tailed pigeons, and sandhill cranes. In order to improve the harvest estimates of these other species, HIP screening questions were designed to identify specific types of hunters. Now the Service is able to conduct five separate surveys that provide a better estimate of the harvest of (1) waterfowl (ducks, sea ducks, mergansers, and geese), (2) mourning doves, white-winged doves, and band-tailed pigeons, (3) coots, gallinules, rails, and snipe, (4) sandhill cranes, and (5) woodcock. This should improve the accuracy and precision of harvest estimates for all five groups

What do hunters gain from HIP?

Accurate and precise estimates of harvest are critical for effective management of migratory birds. Hunting seasons for certain migratory game bird species have been threatened due to the need for improved harvest information. Better estimates of harvest, and consequently the ability to improve management of migratory game bird populations, will be one result of the HIP program. Hunter participation will help with this process and help to ensure viable game bird populations and a hunting tradition for the future.

What to expect when you register (phone in or online) with HIP.

You will be asked to provide your hunting license type and number, your name, address, and date of birth. You will also be asked a few

simple questions regarding your previous year's hunting success. At the end of registration, you will be given your HIP number. You should write it on your hunting license in the space provided. If you are a lifetime license holder, just write your number on a piece of paper and carry it with you when hunting migratory game birds. Registration takes about five minutes. Please remember that the lines get busiest in the fall right before the seasons open. Your HIP number is valid only for the current hunting season. You will need to register again every year you hunt migratory game birds

For more information about HIP call the Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife at (317) 232-4080 or visit the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service HIP](#) page.